

White Paper Overview of skills needs in Norway (Meld. St. 14 (2022-2023))

POLICY DEVELOPMENT**STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN** NORWAY

Timeline

2023 Completed**ID number 47234**

Background

In a labour market where there is unmet demand for several central and critical skills, it is important to clearly prioritise what society should invest in going forward, to cover the most important skills needs in working and social life.

On 24 March the government published the White Paper (Meld. St. 14(2022-2023)) - Overview of skills needs in Norway. The Paper maps the most important skills needs in the world of work. Concerning the green transition, the government intends to prioritise more studentships in higher vocational education in technical subjects, health and the green transition.

Objectives

The overarching aim of the White Paper is to contribute to high employment and to cover the most important skills needs in working and social life. The White Paper points to the most important competence needs going forward and explains the government's measures.

The government prioritises the following areas in its education and skills policy going forward:

- (a) skills necessary for a highly productive and competitive business life;
- (b) skills necessary to carry out the green shift;
- (c) skills necessary to have good welfare services throughout the country and to deal with the demographic developments, balanced against the need for labour in other sectors of society;
- (d) to qualify and mobilise more of those who are outside the labour market.

Description

The White Paper details the government's policy in the following areas:

- (a) dimensioning of the education system;
- (b) access to education throughout the country;
- (c) funding of universities and colleges;

- (d) learning in working life;
- (e) qualification of the labour force reserve;
- (f) use of skills from abroad.

For IVET and CVET, this means:

Dimensioning

The county authorities are responsible for upper secondary and higher vocational education. At the upper secondary level, the county municipalities must balance factors such as student preferences, access to local apprenticeships or the skills needs of working life and society. The government, in collaboration with social partners, plans some structural changes in upper secondary education to align education with workforce needs better, aiming to make upper secondary education more flexible for the young, counteract the decline in apprenticeships during economic downturns and improve accessibility, especially for adults and those outside the workforce.

County councils must expand capacity in higher vocational education in response to job market demands. The government plans to prioritise technical, health, and green subjects and studentships in technical, health, and care subjects and other areas important for the green transition, with ongoing dialogue with the county councils on these priorities.

Access

The Government intends to invest in flexible, decentralised higher vocational education, making it an integral part of institutions' educational activities. Digitised study and training offers are crucial in this effort, also in upper secondary education.

Learning in working life

The government is committed to developing a broad skills reform, raising skills throughout working life and collaborating with social partners. This reform focuses on investment in how the education system, particularly higher vocational education, can contribute to better career paths for skilled workers. Key elements include developing industry programmes and the Industrial Vocational School to meet labour market needs and expanding education support schemes to allow shorter programmes access to student loans.

Qualification of the labour force reserve

The government plans to invest in skills to get more people into work. Adults with low education levels are more often outside the workforce than others. Many also have various health problems, in addition to a lack of skills. To give more people the opportunity to qualify for a permanent connection to working life, the government intends to develop interagency cooperation, particularly between the county councils and the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), so that more people can have the opportunity to complete training leading to a trade or journeyperson's certificate. Local cooperation models between NAV, the county councils and employers concerning VET, already set up in several places, are to be used to develop further offers throughout the country. The government also wants to experiment with extending the duration of a training initiative in NAV because the limited duration may be a barrier for some users.

Use of skills from abroad

Recognition of skills acquired abroad can trigger a skills reserve in foreign employees and give them better opportunities to participate in skills development in working life. The government continues to develop various recognition schemes to make it easier to use expertise from abroad in Norwegian working life.

Funding of universities and colleges does not apply to either IVET or CVET.

2023 Completed

The White Paper was accepted on 24 March 2023. It focused on several key measures,

including:

- (a) considering measures to counteract the decline in apprenticeships during economic downturns;
- (b) dimensioning the vocational offer in line with the needs of society and working life;
- (c) considering measures to make upper secondary education more available for adults;
- (d) collaborating on further measures to ensure more apprenticeships;
- (e) assessing measures to ensure an increased completion rate in upper secondary.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Research (KD)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)
Adult learners

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies
Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Permeability between IVET and CVET and general and vocational pathways, academic and professional higher education

European priorities in VET

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Link to White Paper 14](#)

Related policy developments

2024 Implementation

VET-related priorities in the political platform of the government

Following the elections of autumn 2017, the government announced its priorities on 14 January 2018. For upper secondary VET, they included:



Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

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Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). White Paper Overview of skills needs in Norway (Meld. St. 14 (2022-2023)): Norway. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2024 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/47234>